

THE PORT OF YOUTH

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That was one life that we lived—the present is another."

"And old age will be another." Fuller spoke more seriously. "We will close the doors on the present very soon, you and I, and what will come in the future? That was why I was sailing back to youth; I wanted to find some inspiration, some courage to go on. I thought if I could not find it in my own beginning I might find it in yours. Tell me about your girlhood, will you, my fair Cora?"

Cora Mason drew a lace scarf about her throat as if the warm breeze had suddenly chilled her, and there was a tightening of the muscles around her lips that relaxed into a smile as she saw that Lee was looking at her.

"I was a country girl," she tried to speak indifferently. "My people were poor, not vulgarly poor, like our East Siders, but pathetically poor. There was nothing for my father to do in his native village, so he died of worry and left six youngsters. My mother held on like an elastic band and kept us together, but I could not stand the grind when it came my turn to help. I left home at eighteen and went to the city, as ignorant, as innocent, as ambitious and as poor as a girl could be—the sort of girl that invites the attention of vultures. Do you wish me to go on? I was a woman at twenty."

"No, I only want the ideals that you held in youth. Tell me more of the hopes you entertained when you were leaving home. I am sufficiently familiar with the story of the vulture's prey after it arrives in a city like Gotham."

"I'll tabulate my ambitions as I recall them." Miss Mason still smiled. It did not occur to her that Fuller was more than superficially in earnest.

"First, I wanted to be an artist—I had some talent. I don't think I ever expected fame or great success financially. I did look for recognition and enough, to eat. It was a modest ideal that I raised, but it might as well have been more lofty—I was too poor at nineteen to even purchase paints, but I am still going too fast in my human story!"

"My second ideal was the hope of winning respect. Nothing unusual in a girl of eighteen, of course, but I thought it was original."

"I wanted to be the most respected woman in the world. I hoped to hear even the riff-raff assert its regard for me. Just how I was to win this distinction I did not know, but I began by being just in all my dealings."

"I was all that, and more, up to, say nineteen and a half, then I discovered that justice was apt to overlook itself. In my efforts to be fair to everybody else I had treated myself unfairly. My brain, my body, my purse had suffered. At twenty I had bent backward and become over-just with myself—but there I go again into the realm of womanhood! It is hard to recall one's youth when one has lived so many ages since girlhood!"

Her glance was wandering over the water now and Fuller had to make an



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The illustration shows a military officer hurrying to the telephone for important military business and a civilian cheerfully according him the right of way. This typifies the attitude of the nation and it also typifies the attitude of the Bell System.

The nation is at war and it is necessary that private interests shall be subordinated to the Government's need for telephone service.

When war was declared, the whole Bell System was immediately placed at the disposal of the Government.

During these weeks of military preparedness the Government has had the service of the most comprehensive and efficient telephone system in the world.

As our military strength grows, and we become larger participants in the great war, the demands of the Government upon our service will continue to increase, and must always be met.

An extraordinary increase in telephone traffic, due to the unprecedented commercial and industrial activity incident to the war, must be adequately provided for.

We ask you to cooperate in this patriotic service, and to bear cheerfully any unavoidable inconvenience or delay in your telephone service.

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effort to bring her back to her narrative.

"Of course, my third ideal was love! You expected to hear me say that first, but I left it to the last just to be tantalizing. I was eager for love—the love of everybody. Naturally, longed for the adoration of one man—a lover who was so loyally, so wholly my adorer that in his eyes I would always appear absolutely perfect."

"I practiced affability until I was more than lovable. Women called me

'sweet,' and borrowed my money. Men told me I was charming—an angel—and then came to my 'Furnished Room' and begged my favors—gratis. I would have been a sacrifice if I had not become a woman. Youth is a terrible stage, a sad, sorrowful, foolish stage, for some of us, Lee! I was glad to be done with it soon—and with all its ideals."

"And yet—if they could have been attained!" He was thoroughly serious now.

"Ch, if they only could have been!" Cora sighed as their glances met and clenched with each other.

That night they attended one of the big dances, and, after a waltz, strolled out on the broad veranda of the hotel together.

Sitting in the moonlight on the veranda rail, Lee Fuller seemed to her to be handsomer than ever, but the thing she sensed tonight was the purity of the man—a thing almost too